



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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Thursday, 18 July 2024

CONDEMNATION

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) condemns, in the strongest terms, the cold-blooded murder of three Hmar youths from the Kuki-Zo community in a fake encounter by the Assam police.

A video shot by the police clearly shows that the three victims—Lallungawi Hmar, Lalbiekkung Hmar, and Joshua Lalrinsang—were apprehended by police while they were traveling in an autorickshaw in Assam's Cachar district on July 16, 2024, without using any force.

The police also shot other subsequent videos, which went viral on social media, showing them bound with ropes and taken to an undisclosed location in a forested area. Later, their bullet-riddled bodies turned up at the Silchar Medical College Hospital (SMCH) morgue.

The police version of the event is full of inconsistencies. The Cachar SP, in a statement, says the three youths were arrested on July 16, 2024, around 4:30 p.m. at Krishnapur Road and interrogated, during which they revealed that their counterparts were taking shelter in Bhuban Hills. A special operation was launched on the morning of July 17, 2024, around Bhuban Hills, during which three militants "wearing bulletproof jackets and helmets" were apprehended after being injured in a crossfire. They were later pronounced dead at SMCH.

But in a bizarre twist, the three dead militants (one of them wearing a bulletproof vest in pictures leaked from the morgue) turned out to be the three youths who were already in police custody the previous evening: Lallungawi Hmar, Lalbiekkung Hmar, and Joshua Lalrinsang.

Such a glaring inconsistency clearly shows the killings were extra-judicial, and the policemen involved need to be tried in court for the murder of three Indian citizens.

It is also very unfortunate that Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sharma lauded the killings on social media. In light of the evidence recorded on video and the inconsistency of the police's version of the event, we demand that the state government institute an impartial investigation into the deaths and ensure justice is delivered. We also request the National Human Rights Commission to take suo motu cognizance of the deaths and issue notices to the Assam government to open an investigation into the killings.

Issued by —

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